

67 or welding. The latch mechanism 62 also includes a latch 70 attached by suitable means such as fasteners (not shown) to a rearward longitudinal end 72 of the bottom 36 of the drawer 34 for engaging and disengaging the striker 64. The latch mechanism 62 includes a movable handle 74 for actuating the latch 70 to release the striker 64 to move the drawer 34 from a closed position adjacent to the rear end 16 of the vehicle 12 to an open position spaced longitudinally away from the rear end 16 of the vehicle 12. It should be appreciated that the striker 64 and latch 70 are conventional and known in the art.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please substitute amended claims 1, 8, 14, 20, and 21 as follows for the pending claims with the same number:

1. (THRIC AMENDED) An integrated extendable load floor assembly for a vehicle having a rear end with a floor and sides extending upwardly and along the floor to form a cargo area and a decklid for closing an upper portion of the cargo area, said integrated extendable load floor assembly comprising:

a plurality of rails adapted to be disposed upon the sides above the floor of the rear end;

a load floor operatively cooperating with said rails for sliding movement therealong and to close a longitudinal end of the cargo area; and

a load floor latching mechanism comprising a striker and a latch connected to a rearward longitudinal end of said load floor and the rear end of the vehicle adapted to latch said load floor in a closed position within the cargo area.

8. (THRICE AMENDED) An integrated extendable load floor assembly for a

vehicle having a rear storage area with a longitudinal open end comprising:

at least one rail adapted to be disposed upon a side of the rear storage area;

a load floor cooperating with said at least one rail allowing for a selective sliding movement in and out of the rear storage area of the vehicle and to close the longitudinal open end of the rear storage area; and

a load floor latching mechanism comprising a striker and a latch connected to a rearward longitudinal end of said load floor and the rear storage area of the vehicle adapted to latch said load floor in a closed position within the rear storage area, said load floor latching mechanism including a movable handle disposed on said load floor.

14. (THRICE AMENDED) A vehicle comprising:

a body including a rear end having a floor and sides extending upwardly and along said floor to form a rear storage area having a longitudinal open end;

a decklid pivotally secured to said rear end to cover said rear storage area in a closed position and to allow access to said rear storage area in an open position; and

an integrated extendable load floor assembly cooperating with said rear storage area, said integrated extendable load floor assembly including at least one rail disposed upon each of said sides of said rear storage area and a load floor cooperating with said at least one rail, said load floor having selective sliding movement in and out of said rear storage area of the vehicle and to close said open end of said rear storage area and a load floor latching mechanism comprising a striker and a latch connected to a rearward longitudinal end of said load floor and the body of the vehicle adapted to latch said load floor in a closed position within said rear storage area.

20. (THRICE AMENDED) An automotive vehicle comprising:

a body including a rear end having a floor and sides extending upwardly and along said floor to form a cargo area;

a plurality of rails spaced laterally and extending longitudinally between said sides above said floor;

a load floor operatively cooperating with said rails for sliding movement therealong;

a decklid pivotally secured to said sides to cover said cargo area in a closed position and to allow access to said cargo area in an open position and to allow said load floor to be extended when said decklid is in said open position;

an endgate pivotally connected to said load floor and having a closed upright position and an open horizontal position;

an endgate latching mechanism that latches said endgate in said upright closed position; and

a load floor latching mechanism comprising a striker and a latch connected to a rearward longitudinal end of said load floor and the body of the vehicle adapted to latch said load floor in a closed position within said rear storage area.

21. (THRICE AMENDED) A sedan type automotive vehicle comprising:

a body including a rear end having a floor and sides extending upwardly and along said floor to form a cargo area;

a load floor for sliding movement in and out of said cargo area;

an endgate pivotally connected to said load floor and having a closed upright position and an open horizontal position;

a decklid pivotally secured to said sides and cooperating with said endgate to cover said cargo area in a closed position and to allow access to said cargo area in an open position and to allow objects to be removed from said cargo area when said decklid is in said open position; and

a load floor latching mechanism comprising a striker and a latch connected to a rearward longitudinal end of said load floor and the body of the vehicle adapted to latch said load floor in a closed position within said cargo area.